

Child Poverty Addressed in Medical Articles Written in Japanese: Available on Medical Databases

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Keywords: child poverty, medical articles, accident, abuse and paediatricians

1. Background

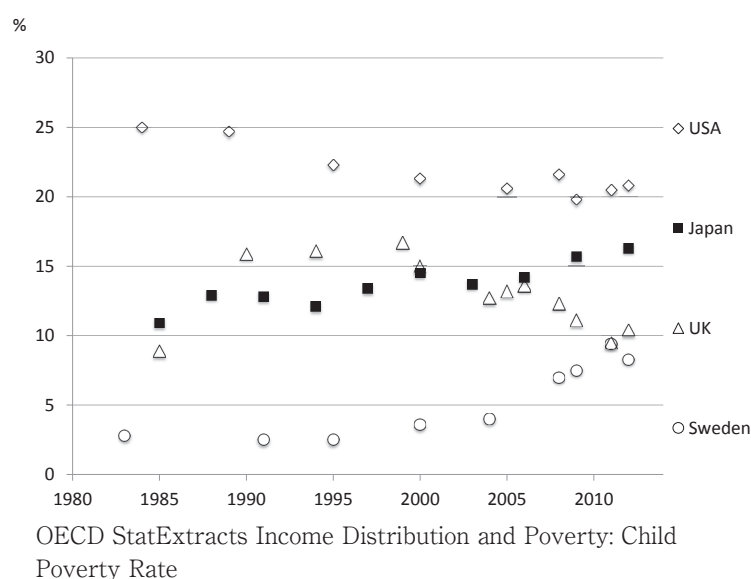
In Japan, inequality has expanded during the last 25 years. Although the child poverty rate was 10.9% in 1985, it has increased to 16.3% in 2012. The Japanese government hasn't proposed any effective schemes against child poverty in the last 25 years.

Fig.1 shows the difference of each change in the child poverty rate in four countries in these two decades. The UK has done a very good job. Sweden has had the worst result, but it is still relatively good. The US had a 20% reduction, but the rate remains high.

Where is Japan going on child poverty? I'm worried about my country.

The Japanese result means the Japanese government hasn't adequately tackled child poverty. From UNICEF Report 10, the relative child poverty rate of Japan was the 9th

Fig.1 Child poverty rates of four countries



worst out of 35 developed countries.

Finally in 2013, the Japanese government introduced a new law against child poverty. But this law does not declare a concrete goal of solving this issue. That lays down a basic legal doctrine but lacks concreteness.

2. Material and Method

The search site “Japanese Medical Abstracts Society” for Japanese was browsed. The search terms were “child + poverty”, “child + accident” and “child + abuse”. The number of Japanese articles was compared to the English articles searched by PubMed.

3. Result and Discussions

The number of articles of three key words written in Japanese in these 20 years is shown in Fig.6. Basically, “Accident” has been recognized as a medical issue. As in 2000, the anti-child abuse law was established, “Abuse” became an important medical issue from this century. Although in the 1990s, the cases of bathtub drowning were quite high, in the 21st century, the number has decreased dramatically. As for other examples, wearing a seat-belt and child resistance lighters became mandatory in 2008 and in 2010, respectively.

The number of child + poverty search results was 159 in the last 20 years. In the same period, that of child + accident was 1,802, and that of child + abuse was 4,119. Although each of them should be an important issue of social paediatrics or child public health, for a long time, child poverty hasn’t been an issue in medical fields. In 1995–2004, the number of articles was only 11, and in 2005–2014, that increased to 148 (Fig.2). For the last decade, we have just started to recognize child poverty as a medical issue.

In comparison with the articles searched in PubMed, the difference in English and Japanese articles was clear (Fig.3). In English articles, child poverty has had the same importance as other child issues and has been tackled strongly. In Japan, this is a new issue which we should wrestle with now and into the future.

In 159 Japanese articles, 135 articles treated the poverty issue in Japan. In the authors of these 159 articles, Specialists in medical fields including paediatricians, psychiatrists, nurses, and dentists wrote 71 articles (45%). The main authors were in the fields of social welfare. This fact indicates that we (Paediatricians) are just recognizing child poverty.

Fig.2 Child+Poverty, Child+Accident and Child+Abuse written in Japanese

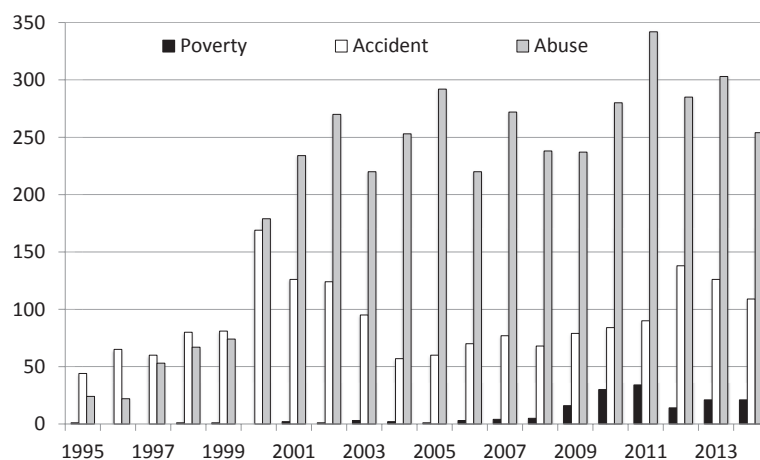
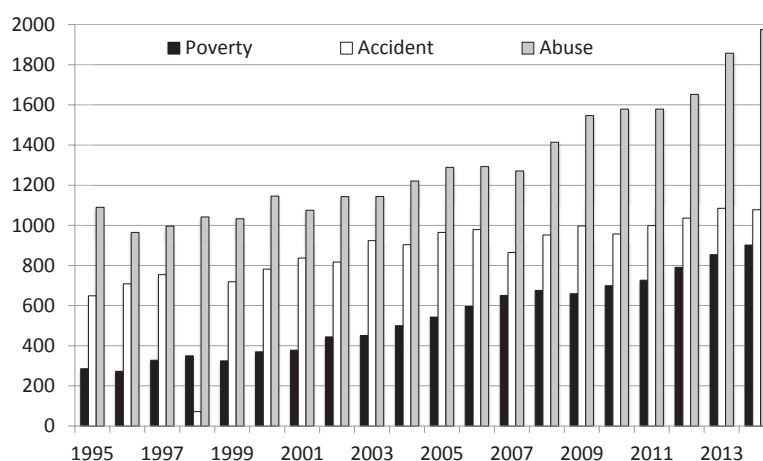


Fig.3 Child+Poverty, Child+Accident and Child+Abuse by PubMed



4. Conclusions

Child poverty has been under reported and not dealt with sufficiently during the last 20 years.

We are just recognizing the responsibility of the medical community in treating this issue.

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医学論文での子どもの貧困の扱い

——医中誌から——

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Keywords：子どもの貧困，医学論文，事故，虐待，小児科医

日本語抄録

医療ではエビデンス（事実）が重視され，それはEBMと略される。子どもの貧困が大きな社会問題となっている以上，小児医療はこの分野でもエビデンスに基づいて役割を果たさねばならない。

海外と日本の小児医療が子どもの貧困にどう向き合ってきたかを，アメリカ国立医学図書館の検索ツール“PubMed”と国内医学論文検索ツール「医学中央雑誌（医中誌）」を用いて，「子ども＋貧困」と「子ども＋事故，子ども＋虐待」の文献数をみてみた。2005-2014年の10年間で比較したところ，PubMedでは貧困が約7万編で，それでも他の検索結果と同じ単位で文献が見られる。しかし，医中誌では貧困は159編と他の検索結果とは桁が違う極めて少ない数の論文しか見られない。

英文誌では，貧困問題が医学のテーマと位置づいている。しかし日本では，1995-2004年の10年間に貧困の論文は11編だけであったことをみると，最近10年間で10倍以上に増えたことにはなる。しかし，過半数は社会福祉や教育などの分野からで，医療からの情報発信ははじまったばかりで，小児医療に関わる我々は，貧困に気づき取り組み始めた段階にあると言える。

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